

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method accessing a Basic Input/Output System (BIOS) routine comprising:

requesting exclusive ownership of the BIOS routine by a software stream;
receiving an indication by the software stream of the results of the requesting step; and if the requesting exclusive ownership step is successful

calling using the BIOS routine by the software stream, wherein the BIOS routine performs an operation on a shared variable; and

returning the BIOS routine by the software stream for use by other software streams.

2. (Original) The method of accessing a BIOS routine as defined in claim 1 wherein receiving an indication by the software stream of the results of the requesting step further comprises receiving an open handle by the software stream if the requesting exclusive ownership step is successful.

3. (Original) The method of accessing a BIOS routine as defined in claim 2 wherein receiving an indication by the software stream of the results of the requesting step further comprises receiving a number representing a valid handle by the software stream if the requesting exclusive ownership step is successful.

4. (Original) The method of accessing a BIOS routine as defined in claim 2 wherein receiving an indication by the software stream of the results of the requesting step further comprises receiving a number representing an invalid handle by the software stream if the requesting exclusive ownership step is unsuccessful.

5. (Original) The method of accessing a BIOS routine as defined in claim 2 wherein returning the BIOS routine by the software stream for use by the other software streams further comprises closing the BIOS routine by the software stream such that the other software streams may be granted exclusive ownership.

6. (Original) The method of accessing a BIOS routine as defined in claim 5 wherein closing the BIOS routine by the software stream further comprises returning the open handle.

7. (Currently amended) A computer system comprising:
a microprocessor;
a main memory array;
a first bridge logic device coupling the microprocessor and main memory array;
~~— a graphics controller coupled to the first bridge logic device;~~
~~— a video display coupled to the graphics controller;~~
a second bridge logic device coupled to the first bridge logic device by way of a primary expansion bus;
a Read Only Memory (ROM) coupled to the second bridge logic device by way of a secondary expansion bus, the ROM storing Basic Input/Output System (BIOS) routines;
a software stream executed by the microprocessor, the software stream calls BIOS routines; and
wherein the software stream requests exclusive ownership of a BIOS routine prior to its use, and if the software stream is granted exclusive ownership, the software stream uses-calls the BIOS routine to modify a shared variable and then returns the exclusive ownership.

8. (Currently amended) The computer system as defined in claim 7 wherein the software stream is ~~further adapted to request~~ requests ownership again if exclusive ownership is denied.

9. (Original) The computer system as defined in claim 7 wherein the software stream receives a valid handle to the BIOS routine if the software stream is granted exclusive ownership of the BIOS routine.

10. (Original) The computer system as defined in claim 7 wherein the software stream returns exclusive ownership by returning the valid handle.

11. (Original) The computer system as define in claim 7 wherein the software stream receives an invalid handle to the BIOS routine if the software stream is not granted exclusive ownership of the BIOS routine.

12. (Currently amended) In a computer system having a microprocessor executing a software thread, the software thread adapted to call Basic Input/Output System (BIOS) routines, a method of calling BIOS routines comprising:

opening the BIOS routines by the software thread to the exclusion of other software threads;

using calling the BIOS routines by the software thread, wherein the BIOS routines modify a shared variable; and

closing the BIOS routines by the software thread when the utilizing step is complete.

13. (Original) The method of calling BIOS routines as defined in claim 12 wherein opening the BIOS routines by the software thread to the exclusion of other software threads further comprises requesting exclusive ownership of the BIOS routines by the software thread.

14. (Original) The method of calling BIOS routines as defined in claim 13 wherein opening the BIOS routines by the software thread to the exclusion of other software threads further comprises receiving an open handle if the requesting exclusive ownership step is successful.

15. (Original) The method of calling BIOS routines as defined in claim 13 wherein opening the BIOS routines by the software thread to the exclusion of other software threads further comprises receiving an invalid handle if the requesting exclusive ownership step is unsuccessful.

16. (Original) The method of calling BIOS routines as defined in claim 12 wherein opening the BIOS routines by the software thread to the exclusion of other software threads further comprises receiving an open handle if the opening the BIOS routines step is successful.

17. (Original) The method of calling BIOS routines as defined in claim 16 wherein closing the BIOS routines by the software thread when the utilizing step is complete further comprises returning the open handle.

18.-21. (Cancelled).